

Message Text

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PAGE 01 FREETO 01973 201629Z
ACTION AF-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7901

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: CG, EAID, EFIN, PINS, MOPS
SUBJ: BRIEFING HOST OFFICIALS ON PARIS MEETING ON ZAIRE

REF: STATE 148408

1. I SAW FONMIN CONTEH ON ANOTHER SUBJECT ON JUNE 13 JUST AFTER RECEIPT OF REFTEL. AT THE END OF OUR INITIAL CONVERSATION, HE BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT OF ZAIRE CLEARLY ON THE BASIS OF NEWS REPORTS ABOUT THE PARIS MEETINGS. HE EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN ABOUT THE "IMPLICATIONS" OF THE PARIS MEETINGS PARTICULARLY CONCERNING THE INTRODUCTION OF FOREIGN TROOPS. HE INDICATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE HUMANITARIAN MOTIVES BEHIND THE INITIAL INTRODUCTION OF WESTERN TROOPS INTO SHABA BUT EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT IF THEY WERE REPLACED BY MOROCCAN TROOPS ONLY, SIERRA LEONE WOULD NOT APPROVE; THE STRONG IMPLICATION BEING THAT MOROCCANS WOULD, IN THAT CASE, BE TOOLS OF THE EUROPEAN POWERS.

2. I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD JUST RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARIS MEETING WHICH I WOULD SEND HIM THAT MORNING. HE PROMISED TO RESPOND AND DID SO JUNE 20.

3. THE MINISTER'S NOTE READS (UNNECESSARY WORDS OMITTED):
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PAGE 02 FREETO 01973 201629Z

--"THE RECENT EVENTS IN SHABA ZAIRE UNDOUBTEDLY CAUSE CONCERN ON SEVERAL LEVELS: LOSS OF INNOCENT LIVES, THE DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY AND THE GENERAL INSTABILITY WHICH WAS CREATED IN THAT PART OF AFRICA BY THE PRESENCE OF FOREIGN TROOPS.

--SIERRA LEONE CONCEDES THE RIGHT TO TAKE MEASURES OF HU-

MANITARIAN NATURE WITH THE EXPRESSED AND LIMITED OBJECTIVE OF SAVING INNOCENT LIVES. BUT THE EXTENT AND DURATION OF SUCH MEASURES MUST BE CONDITIONED AND CONFIRMED BY THE EXIGENCIES OF THE MOMENT.

--THE RECENT PARIS CONFERENCE ITSELF CAUSED ANXIETY IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT ITS IMPLICATIONS MAY BE FAR REACHING FOR THE AFRICAN CONTINENT. IN PARTICULAR, IT RAISED THE INEVITABLE SPECTRE OF MAKING THE AFRICAN CONTINENT ONCE MORE A PIECE IN ON THE CHESSBOARD OF DETENTE BETWEEN THE SUPER POWERS. IT IS IN THE LIGHT OF THIS CONSIDERATION THAT THE SIERRA LEONE GOVERNMENT, IN AS MUCH AS IT APPRECIATES THE PROPOSALS EMANATING FROM THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AT THE SAID PARIS CONFERENCE, WOULD URGE THAT RESTRAINT AND MODERATION BE EXERCISED BY ALL CONCERNED.

--WE BELIEVE THAT THE ZAIRIAN PROBLEM IS AN INTERNAL MATTER TO WHICH THE ONLY LASTING LONG TERMS SOLUTION CAN BE FOUND ONLY BY THE ZAIRIAN THEMSELVES. AND WE WOULD FURTHER URGE THAT THE ECONOMIC AND DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS THAT MAY BE EXERTED TOWARDS THE REHABILITATION OF THE ZAIRIAN ECONOMY SHOULD BE DONE AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND.

--THE SIERRA LEONE GOVERNMENT OF COURSE IS READY AND WILLING TO BE A PARTY TO ANY PROCESS THAT MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE RECONCILLIATION THAT IS NECESSARY TO STABILISE BOTH THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 FREETO 01973 201629Z

INTERNAL SITUATION IN ZAIRE ITSELF AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH HER NEIGHBORS."

4. COMMENT: THE MINISTER'S COMMENTS SUGGEST A BASIC UNEASE (WHICH MAY BE REFLECTED ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA) ABOUT THE IDEA OF FORMER COLONIAL POWERS, FRANCE AND BELGUIM, INTERVENING IN THE INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF ZAIRE. END COMMENT.
LINEHAN

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